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Occupational Employment and Wages in Bellingham — May 2016

Workers in the Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$23.08 in May 2016, about 3 percent below the nationwide average of \$23.86, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Richard Holden noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were lower than their respective national averages in 7 of the 22 major occupational groups, including legal; computer and mathematical; and management. Eleven groups had significantly higher wages than their respective national averages, including protective service; construction and extraction; and healthcare practitioners and technical.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 5 of the 22 occupational groups, including food preparation and serving related; production; and construction and extraction. Conversely, six groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including computer and mathematical; management; and protective service. (See [table A](#) and [box note](#) at end of release.)

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2016

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Bellingham	United States	Bellingham	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Total, all occupations	100.0	100.0	\$23.86	\$23.08	-3
Management	5.1	4.2*	56.74	49.83*	-12
Business and financial operations	5.2	4.6*	36.09	32.72*	-9
Computer and mathematical	3.0	1.6*	42.25	34.20*	-19
Architecture and engineering	1.8	1.6	40.53	41.06	1
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.7*	35.06	29.23*	-17
Community and social service	1.4	1.4	22.69	23.47	3
Legal	0.8	0.5*	50.95	35.29*	-31
Education, training, and library	6.2	7.1	26.21	25.48	-3
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.4	1.5	28.07	21.88*	-22
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.9	5.1	38.06	41.30*	9
Healthcare support	2.9	2.8	14.65	17.67*	21
Protective service	2.4	1.8*	22.03	31.92*	45
Food preparation and serving related	9.2	10.8*	11.47	12.76*	11
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.2	3.5*	13.47	14.46*	7
Personal care and service	3.2	3.0	12.74	13.99*	10
Sales and related	10.4	11.2*	19.50	18.00*	-8
Office and administrative support	15.7	14.9	17.91	18.03	1
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.4	13.37	19.50*	46

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2016 - Continued

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Bellingham	United States	Bellingham	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Construction and extraction.....	4.0	5.3*	23.51	28.60*	22
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	4.0	22.45	23.49*	5
Production	6.5	7.8*	17.88	20.72*	16
Transportation and material moving	6.9	6.4	17.34	18.22*	5

Footnotes:

(1) A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in the Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

* The percent share of employment or mean hourly wage for this area is significantly different from the national average of all areas at the 90-percent confidence level.

One occupational group—food preparation and serving related—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Bellingham had 8,870 jobs in food preparation and serving related, accounting for 10.8 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 9.2-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$12.76, significantly above the national wage of \$11.47.

Some of the larger detailed occupations within the food preparation and serving related group included combined food preparation and serving workers, including fast food (2,310), waiters and waitresses (1,550), and food preparation workers (1,000). Among the higher paying jobs were chefs and head cooks, and institution and cafeteria cooks, with mean hourly wages of \$21.84 and \$16.15, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were dishwashers (\$10.90) and restaurant, lounge, and coffee shop hosts and hostesses (\$10.91). (Detailed occupational data for food preparation and serving related are presented in [table 1](#); for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to www.bls.gov/oes/2016/may/oes_13380.htm.)

Location quotients allow us to explore the occupational make-up of a metropolitan area by comparing the composition of jobs in an area relative to the national average. (See [table 1](#).) For example, a location quotient of 2.0 indicates that an occupation accounts for twice the share of employment in the area than it does nationally. In the Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area, above-average concentrations of employment were found in some of the occupations within the food preparation and serving related group. For instance, food preparation workers were employed at 2.0 times the national rate in Bellingham, and dishwashers, at 1.8 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, waiters and waitresses had a location quotient of 1.0 in Bellingham, indicating that this particular occupation's local and national employment shares were similar.

These statistics are from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a federal-state cooperative program between BLS and State Workforce Agencies, in this case, the Washington Employment Security Department.

Notes on Occupational Employment Statistics Data

A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with the ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. It is entirely possible that a large difference between two values is not significantly different statistically, while a small difference is, since both the size and heterogeneity of the sample affect the relative error of the data being tested.

Technical Note

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey is a semiannual mail survey measuring occupational employment and wage rates for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments in the United States. The OES data available from BLS include cross-industry occupational employment and wage estimates for the nation; over 650 areas, including states and the District of Columbia, metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), metropolitan divisions, nonmetropolitan areas, and territories; national industry-specific estimates at the NAICS sector, 3-, 4-, and selected 5- and 6-digit industry levels, and national estimates by ownership across all industries and for schools and hospitals. OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm.

OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Each year, two semiannual panels of approximately 200,000 sampled establishments are contacted, one panel in May and the other in November. Responses are obtained by mail, Internet or other electronic means, email, telephone, or personal visit. The May 2016 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2016, November 2015, May 2015, November 2014, May 2014, and November 2013. The overall national response rate for the six panels, based on the 50 states and the District of Columbia, is 73 percent based on establishments and 69 percent based on weighted sampled employment. The unweighted employment of sampled establishments across all six semiannual panels represents approximately 58 percent of total national employment. The sample in the Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area included 1,386 establishments with a response rate of 77 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm.

The May 2016 OES estimates are based on the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system and the 2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Information about the 2010 SOC is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/soc and information about the 2012 NAICS is available at www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm.

Metropolitan area definitions

The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

The **Bellingham, Wash. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Whatcom County.

Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at www.bls.gov/regions/west. Answers to frequently asked questions about the OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm. Detailed technical information about the OES survey is available in our Survey Methods and Reliability Statement on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/oes/current/methods_statement.pdf.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request . Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2016

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Food preparation and serving related occupations	8,870	1.2	\$12.76	\$26,550
Chefs and head cooks.....	50	0.7	21.84	45,430
First-line supervisors of food preparation and serving workers	620	1.2	15.89	33,040
Cooks, fast food	(5)	(5)	12.86	26,760
Cooks, institution and cafeteria	360	1.5	16.15	33,600
Cooks, restaurant	900	1.3	12.98	27,010
Cooks, short order	80	0.7	11.55	24,020
Food preparation workers	1,000	2.0	13.57	28,220
Bartenders.....	420	1.2	12.67	26,350
Combined food preparation and serving workers, including fast food	2,310	1.2	11.30	23,500
Counter attendants, cafeteria, food concession, and coffee shop	(5)	(5)	11.38	23,680
Waiters and waitresses	1,550	1.0	13.56	28,200
Food servers, nonrestaurant	150	1.0	11.54	24,000
Dining room and cafeteria attendants and bartender helpers.....	(5)	(5)	11.05	22,980
Dishwashers.....	520	1.8	10.90	22,670
Hosts and hostesses, restaurant, lounge, and coffee shop.....	180	0.7	10.91	22,690

Footnotes:

(1) For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in the Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_13380.htm

(2) Estimates for detailed occupations do not sum to the totals because the totals include occupations not shown separately. Estimates do not include self-employed workers.

(3) The location quotient is the ratio of the area concentration of occupational employment to the national average concentration. A location quotient greater than one indicates the occupation has a higher share of employment than average, and a location quotient less than one indicates the occupation is less prevalent in the area than average.

(4) Annual wages have been calculated by multiplying the hourly mean wage by a "year-round, full-time" hours figure of 2,080 hours; for those occupations where there is not an hourly mean wage published, the annual wage has been directly calculated from the reported survey data.

(5) Estimate not released.